

## Presentation 8b – Karen Quigley

### Prospective Study of Functional Status in Veterans at Risk for Medically Unexplained Symptoms

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### Objectives

1. To determine prospectively the pre-deployment and immediate post-deployment risk factors (such as trait negative emotionality and prior trauma) that predict later medically unexplained symptoms (MUS) and poor functional status
2. To determine prospectively the pre-deployment and immediate post-deployment resilience factors (such as coping style and social support) that predict later medically unexplained symptoms (MUS) and poor functional status
3. To improve on previous design problems (recall bias, selection bias and lack of effective baselines) in studies of MUS

### Preliminary Results

- Finishing a pilot study (currently 14 subjects tested) to determine the feasibility of and time required for the self-report and physiological measures (reactive salivary cortisol and cardiac autonomic function)
- Developed a computer program that presents all questionnaires to the subject for direct data entry via a mouse & keyboard
- Developed an Access database (including automated data import and report generation) for all self-report variables

### Experimental Plan

- Prospective, longitudinal observational study
- Predictors: Negative emotionality, dissociative tendencies, social support, coping skills, current symptoms, cortisol and cardiac autonomic stress reactivity (to a 14 minute combined mental/physical stressor)
- Outcomes: SF-36 Mental and Physical Component Summary scores, healthcare utilization, chronic multisymptom illness status (using CDC case definition)
- Controls: Prior trauma, PTSD symptoms, current distress, body mass index, prior environmental exposures, age, gender, education